

My name is Emerson Zecena and I am here to support S.B 284. AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

The matter of undocumented immigrants in Connecticut receiving health insurance is especially significant to me since it impacts the everyday life of me and my family. I am a child of two incredibly hard-working parents who, despite working two jobs, are forced to choose between food and healthcare. Since I could remember, my mother has always suffered tremendously from innumerable health complications, one of them being iron deficiency anemia. Not too long ago, my mother went to get blood work done at a nearby clinic. Her healthcare provider told her that she had severely low iron in her blood and that she required doses of intravenous iron infusions to maintain a healthy lifestyle. My mother is unable to follow the medical advice of her doctor. The doses for her treatment are overwhelmingly expensive and she doesn't have the medical insurance to help absorb the cost. Despite working two jobs and picking up extra shifts at work, she has yet to save enough money-- not for some luxury, but for her healthcare. My mother has begun to increasingly show signs of consistent dizziness, fatigue, weakness, and immense leg pain that restricts her from movement. She is not a medical mystery; her doctor has diagnosed her and told her how to treat her condition. What holds her back from receiving healthcare? Not science, but her immigration status. When this bill is passed in the state of Connecticut, the financial burdens my family currently faces will be alleviated. My mother will be able to access the healthcare she needs, and will be able to work without pain.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Healthcare is a human right to all regardless of your immigration status.

Thank you for your time,

Emerson Zecena